

Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EPA-04 CEQ-01 AID-05 CIAE-00
ERDA-07 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 INR-07 IO-13 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4034
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY BERN
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
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DEPT FOR OES: DEPT PASS TO EPA, CEQ

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SENV, GW
SUBJ: RHINE RIVER CLEAN-UP ACCORDS SIGNED

1. SUMMARY: THREE AGREEMENTS SIGNED IN BONN ON DECEMBER 3 BY THE MEMBER NATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL RHINE PROTECTION COMMISSION (IRPC) WILL REDUCE THE AMOUNTS OF CHLORIDES DUMPED INTO THE RHINE, PROHIBIT THE DUMPING OF CERTAIN CHEMICALS INTO THE RHINE, AND WILL MAKE THE EC A MEMBER OF THE IRPC. DESPITE CRITICISM OF THE ACCORDS, THEY ARE SEEN AS A NECESSARY FIRST STEP TO FURTHER CLEAN UP EFFORTS. END SUMMARY.
 2. MINISTERS FROM THE FRG, FRANCE, THE NETHERLANDS, LUXEMBOURG AND SWITZERLAND SIGNED THE FIRST AGREEMENT THAT WOULD REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF CHLORIDES THAT THE FRENCH DUMP INTO THE RHINE IN CONNECTION WITH POTASH MINING OPERATIONS IN ALSACE. FRANCE HAS A \$26 MILLION PROGRAM TO PUMP PART OF THE CHLORIDES DEEP UNDERGROUND. THE NETHERLANDS WILL PAY 34 PERCENT OF THE COST, THE FRG 30 PERCENT AND SWITZERLAND 6 PERCENT. BY MID-1978
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FRANCE WILL REDUCE THE SALT DUMPED BY 20 KILOGRAMS PER

SECOND (EQUIVALENT TO 5.5 PERCENT OF THE RHINE'S TOTAL SALT LOAD). FRANCE WILL FURTHER REDUCE THIS IN STAGES SO THAT AN ADDITIONAL 40 KG/SECOND WILL BE ACHIEVED BY 1980.

3. THE CHEMICAL AGREEMENT SIGNED BY THE FIVE NATIONS PROHIBITS THE DUMPING OF CADMIUM AND QUICKSILVER INTO THE RHINE, AND CALLS FOR THE IRPC TO FORMULATE A LIST OF OTHER CHEMICALS TO BE BANNED.

4. THE FINAL AGREEMENT CALLS FOR THE EC TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE IRPC. THE EC HAS BEEN ATTENDING MEETING OF THE IRPC SINCE 1973 AS AN OBSERVER.

5. COMMENT: THE NETHERLANDS AND DOMESTIC FRG GROUPS ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE "LOW" LEVELS OF POLLUTANT REDUCTION RESULTING FROM THESE AGREEMENTS AND WILL PRESS FOR FURTHER PROGRESS IN CLEANING UP THE RHINE. THE ADDITION OF THE EC TO THE IRPC MAY PRESAGE FURTHER EC INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL WATER POLLUTION PROBLEMS AND CONTINUED PRESSURE FOR PROGRESS ON THE ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF INTERNATIONAL WATERCOURSES AGAINST POLLUTION WHICH HAD BEEN IN NEGOTIATION SINCE 1967. FUTURE PROBLEMS ARE LIKELY TO CENTER AROUND THE ALLOCATION OF CLEANUP COSTS AMONG AFFECTED NATIONS.
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